

true one, and was aided by that which was apt and natural. No better illustration could be given of the fact, that phraseology may be the life or death of a cause, according as it is happy or unfortunate.

A similar instance is the case of 'Bartram's Sandpiper.' Ever since Wilson's time this name has been continually thrust into the face of the public, only to be as continually rejected; 'Upland Plover' it continues to be in the east, and 'Quail' on the Assiniboine, in spite of Bartram and Wilson, and will continue so until some name, answering all conditions, is brought forward; for here, as elsewhere, the law of the survival of the fittest rigidly prevails. As an example of the fit ousting the false, note how, in spite of scientists, 'Veery' is supplanting 'Wilson's Thrush' throughout the length and breadth of the land.

The spurious English names scarcely need comment, they so evidently contain in themselves the elements of their own destruction. Imagine a western farmer being told that a certain songster was a 'Ptilogonys.' In spite of the books, the other three examples cannot hold ground against 'Willet,' 'Ground Wren,' and 'Waterhen,' respectively.

The purpose of a Check List that includes English names is, I take it, not to attempt the impossible feat of dictating to our woodmen what names they shall give their feathered friends, but rather to preserve and publish such names as are evolved in the natural way,—names which are the outcome of circumstances. Only in case of egregious error is a common name to be superseded; and in doing this it must be remembered that no name can be popular unless true to the principles of the English tongue. It must be short, distinctive, and, if possible, descriptive. Of this class are Veery, Junco, and Vireo. These are the only successful artificial names that I can at present recollect. Among natural English names for American birds are Bobolink, Chewink, Kingbird, and many others. Such as these not only more than hold their own, but are as great aids to the spread of knowledge as the Ptilogonys kind are hindrances; while such as Wilson's Thrush can only be accepted as provisional, until the better knowledge of the bird and its surroundings shall result in the evolution of an English name founded on true principles.

ERNEST E. T. SETON,

*Glen Cottage, Howard Street,
Toronto, March 21, 1885.*

of Manitoba.

NOTES AND NEWS.

THE determination of the place and date of the next meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union having been referred by the Union to the Council, the Council has decided upon New York as the place, and the third Tuesday in November (Nov. 17) as the date, of the meeting for 1885.

At a meeting of the Council of the A. O. U., held in Washington, April 21, the Committee on the Revision of the Nomenclature and Classification of North American Birds presented its final report, which was accepted, and ordered printed with as little delay as possible, under the supervision of the Committee. The Report, as previously stated in the pages of 'The Auk' (I, pp. 371, 372), consists of a code of nomenclatural rules, adopted by the Committee for its guidance in its work, and a new Check List of North American Birds. It may now be announced that the first part of the report, the 'Code,' is already in type, and the printing of the Check List will proceed as rapidly as practicable, and the publication of the whole Report may be expected during the coming autumn.

As announced in the April number of 'The Auk' (II, p. 223), an appropriation of \$5000 was granted by the last Congress, through the Department of Agriculture, in aid of the work of the Committee on Migration. This fund, which becomes available on July 1, is to be expended through the officers of the Department of Agriculture, in behalf of 'Economic Ornithology,' which will not only embrace the migration and distribution of our birds, but also their food habits in relation to agriculture. In recognition of the action taken by the A. O. U. in securing the appropriation, the Department of Agriculture invited the Council of the A. O. U. to select a superintendent to carry on the contemplated work, already so earnestly begun under the auspices of the Union. The Council, at its meeting held April 21, in Washington, unanimously appointed Dr. C. Hart Merriam, Chairman of the Committee on Migration, as its representative. Dr. Merriam will enter upon the duties of the position July 1, having his official headquarters in the Department of Agriculture at Washington. As his first assistant he has been fortunate in securing the services of Dr. A. K. Fisher of Sing Sing, Superintendent of the 'Atlantic District,' in the work of the Migration Committee.

Mr. William Brewster returned recently from the mountain region of Western North Carolina, where he spent portions of May and June in ornithological exploration. Although failing to discover any 'lost species' (such as Bachman's Warbler and the like), he was enabled to obtain a great deal of information about the summer bird-life of this interesting and hitherto ornithologically unexplored region. A detailed report of Mr. Brewster's interesting discoveries may be expected in a future number of 'The Auk.'

Mr. H. B. Bailey's well-known oölogical collection—one of the largest and finest private collections in the United States—has recently been purchased by the American Museum of Natural History, in New York City, to which it has already been transferred. This collection includes the nests and eggs of many foreign birds, particularly European,

as well as those of nearly all of the known North American species, many of which are represented by extensive series. Mr. Bailey is still engaged upon its rearrangement, by whom it is to be put in order and duly labelled.

MR. George B. Sennett, having recently become a resident of New York City, has placed his large ornithological collection on deposit in the American Museum of Natural History in Central Park. As is well known, Mr. Sennett's collection is especially rich in Texas birds and their nests and eggs, which it is his intention to enlarge and render complete by further explorations in that State. It already contains large series, both of the skins and nests and eggs of many of the rarer species, and thus forms a valuable addition to the available material for research in ornithology contained in the American Museum.

MR. William Brewster has been appointed 'Assistant in Ornithology' at the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy in Cambridge, taking the place formerly held there by Mr. Allen. The Museum is to be congratuated on having secured so capable and trustworthy a curator as Mr. Brewster is well known to be.

At a meeting of the Ridgway Ornithological Club of Chicago, held May 14, the following officers were elected for the ensuing year: President, B. T. Gault; Vice-President and Treasurer, G. F. Morcom; Secretary, H. K. Coale; Curator, H. L. Fulton; Librarian, J. G. Parker. The papers read at recent meetings of the Club include 'Notes on Arizona Birds,' by Mr. Coale, and 'The Woodpeckers of Michigan, with remarks on their Anatomy,' by Dr. Gibbs.

MR. Cory, having completed his work on the 'Birds of Haiti and San Domingo,' is now gathering material for a general work on the Birds of the West Indies, "including the Bahama Islands, and the Greater and Lesser Antilles, excepting the Islands of Tobago and Trinidad." As preliminary thereto he has already published a list of the species, giving their West Indian range.

DR. L. Stejneger's Report on his ornithological work in Kamtschatka is rapidly passing through the press at the Government Printing Office, and its publication may be expected at an early day. It forms 'Bulletin 29' of the U. S. National Museum, and is entitled 'Results of Ornithological Explorations in Kamtschatka and in the Commander Islands.' It will make a volume of 300-350 pages, and be illustrated with 8 plates (7 of them colored), and numerous cuts in the text. About 150 species will be treated in detail, besides which a list will be given of all the species known to have been taken in Kamtschatka.

MR. JOHN MURDOCH'S Report on his ornithological work at Point Barrow is already in type, and its early publication may be expected. It forms a part of the general Report of the Point Barrow Expedition, and is illustrated with two colored plates of Ross's Gull (*Rodostethia rosea*).

WE are informed that Mr. Thomas McIlwraith, of Hamilton, Ontario, is preparing a work on the birds of that Province, to be published early in the fall. It will give not only a list of the species thus far recorded from Ontario, with notes on their distribution and habits, but also include descriptions of the species, thus forming a convenient hand-book of the birds of Ontario.

THE present year continues prolific in new serials devoted to natural history, most of which include notes and papers relating to ornithology. Many of these serials are to be classed as juvenile and amateur, having very little scientific importance, yet, as they claim to have a wide circulation, doubtless do much good in awakening and extending interest in natural history subjects. The crudities and ignorance displayed by some of them, however, scarcely make them very safe guides to the young student, or give the publications a very creditable standing. In several cases they are to be looked upon rather as the advertising adjuncts of dealers in natural history material than as *bona fide* natural history journals. Among the purely ornithological claimants upon our attention is 'Our Birds,' an 8-page monthly, published at Holyoke, Mass., by Frank H. Metcalf, and edited by Richard S. Brooks. The first number is dated May, 1885. 'The Western Oölogist,' published by Frank M. Sherin, at Milwaukee, Wis., is another ornithological aspirant to fame, a 4-page 'specimen number' of which bears date, May, 1885. It is to be issued monthly, and enlarged to eight pages per number. It is to be hoped that in future a little more care will be bestowed upon the spelling of scientific names, and that a higher grade of ornithological knowledge will be displayed in these publications than is evinced by one of the papers under notice, which describes a Pelican as "a wading bird standing six feet high in his bare feet." 'The Museum,' a 16-page monthly, of which the first number also bears date May, 1885, is an illustrated journal, published at Philadelphia, "in the interests of Young Naturalists and Collectors of all Classes." Its list of contributors includes well-known writers in various departments of natural history; it is edited with care, neatly printed, and altogether presents an attractive appearance. Among the new serials should also be mentioned the 'Bulletin of the Brookville Society of Natural History,' published by the Society, the first number of which has recently appeared, containing a paper in part ornithological by Mr. A. W. Butler.